

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A stirred tank for storing a part of yeast slurry discharged from fermentation tanks where beer is fermented, and then returning the part of yeast slurry to the fermentation tanks for reuse, comprising a tank body with a bottom portion having an inverted cone shape, and a stirring impeller made up of vertically oriented surfaces with no slant surface and positioned within the tank body of the stirred tank and so constructed that a maximum diameter of a rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 60-90% of the inner diameter of the stirred tank, and the height of the rotation body is 70% or more of a depth of the part of yeast slurry stored in the stirred tank.

2. (Original) A stirred tank according to claim 1, wherein the maximum diameter of the rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 70-90% of the inner diameter of the stirred tank.

3. (Previously Presented) A stirred tank according to claim 1, wherein the height of the rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 90-120% of the depth of the yeast slurry.

4. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing beer including the process of storing in a stirred tank a part of yeast slurry discharged from fermentation tanks where beer is fermented, and then returning the part of yeast slurry from the stirred tank to the fermentation tanks for reuse, comprising:

providing a stirring impeller made up of vertically oriented surfaces with no slanting surface and positioned within a tank body of the stirred tank, said tank body having a bottom

portion of an inverted cone shape, and so constructed that a maximum diameter of a rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 60-90% of the inner diameter of the stirred tank, and the height of the rotation body is 70% or more of a depth of the part of yeast slurry stored in the stirred tank; and

stirring the yeast slurry by rotating the stirring impeller at a rotational speed of 1-30 rpm.

5. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 4, wherein the maximum diameter of the rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 70-90% of the inner diameter of the stirred tank.

6. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 4, wherein the height of the rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 90-120% of the depth of the yeast slurry.

7. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 4, wherein the stirring impeller is rotated at a rotational speed of 1-20 rpm.

8. (Cancel)

9. (Previously Presented) A stirred tank according to claim 2, wherein the height of the rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 90-120% of the depth of the yeast slurry.

10. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 5, wherein the height of the rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 90-120% of the depth of the yeast slurry.

11. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 5,

Application Serial No.: 09/926,146  
Amendment dated July 26, 2004  
Reply to Office Action dated March 24, 2004

wherein the stirring impeller is rotated at a rotational speed of 1-20 rpm.

12. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 6, wherein the stirring impeller is rotated at a rotational speed of 1-20 rpm.

13. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 10, wherein the stirring impeller is rotated at a rotational speed of 1-20 rpm.

14. (Cancel)

15. (Cancel)

16. (Previously Presented) A stirred tank according to claim 1, wherein the stirring impeller has no hole or opening.

17. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing beer according to claim 4, wherein the stirring impeller has no hole or opening.

18. (Currently Amended) A stirred tank for storing a part of yeast slurry discharged from fermentation tanks where beer is fermented, and then returning the part of yeast slurry to the fermentation tanks for reuse, comprising a tank body with a bottom portion having an inverted cone shape, and a stirring impeller including vertically flat surfaced paddle blades with no slanting surfaces, the stirring impeller being positioned within the tank body of the stirred tank and so constructed that a maximum diameter of a rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 60-90% of the inner diameter of the stirred tank, and the height of the rotation body is 70% or more of a depth of the part of yeast slurry stored in the stirred tank.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing beer including the process of

Application Serial No.: 09/926,146  
Amendment dated July 26, 2004  
Reply to Office Action dated March 24, 2004

is fermented, and then returning the part of yeast slurry from the stirred tank to the fermentation tanks for reuse, comprising:

providing a stirring impeller including vertically flat surfaced paddle blades with no slanting surface, the stirring impeller being positioned within a tank body of the stirred tank, said tank body having a bottom portion of an inverted cone shape, and so constructed that a maximum diameter of a rotation body defined by the rotation of the stirring impeller is 60-90% of the inner diameter of the stirred tank, and the height of the rotation body is 70% or more of a depth of the part of yeast slurry stored in the stirred tank; and

stirring the yeast slurry by rotating the stirring impeller at a rational speed of 1-30 rpm.